

Community of Practice (CoP)

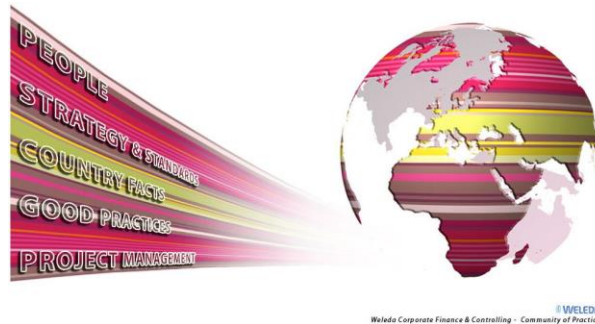


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1. WHAT:

Communities of practice (CoP) are defined as groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Three characteristics are crucial for a CoP :

- The **Knowledge Domain** is a collection of topics, key issues, problems and open points that CoP members commonly experience in their daily work. A domain of knowledge creates common ground, inspires members to participate, guides their learning and gives meaning to their actions.
- The **Community** consists of the personal and institutional relationships between the members, which engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share Information, build relationships.
- The **Practice** covers frameworks, standard, ideas, instruments, stories, experiences, lessons learned and documents that community members share. Web-based technologies gave rise to the developments of *virtual CoP*, providing learning opportunities for people distributed across the globe. Communities of Practice is also a method of knowledge-oriented cooperation and Knowledge Management (KM).

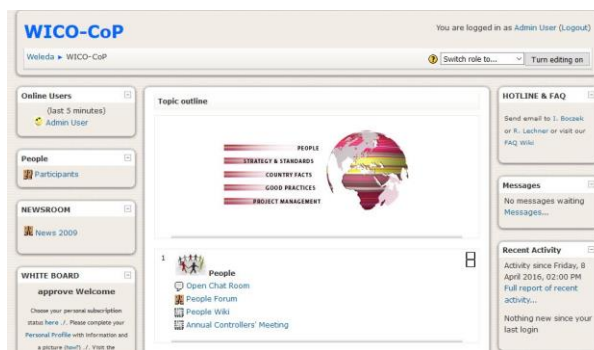


2. WHY:

In the globalised and an rapid changing economy, knowledge and learning have become the new strategy in organizations. Thus, a concept of CoP is widely used for supporting knowledge creation and knowledge sharing, in particular, tacit knowledge, which is owned by the individual members of the CoP.

Benefits:

- Create & steward knowledge assets accessible in one place
- Support faster problem solving
- Build core capabilities and knowledge competencies
- Increase access to expertise across the company
- Foster a learning-focused sense of identity
- Help develop individual skills and competencies



3. WHO:

(Virtual) CoP can be used by everyone in organizations, firms as well as in academia.

4. HOW:

A CoP can be built by developing and balancing *3 CoP-Elements*

(Domain, Community, Practice), supporting and recognising its *5 CoP-Stages* (Life-cycle):

Potential, Coalescing, Maturing, Stewardship, Transformation.

A CoP can only be cultivated (not managed) by considering the main *CoP roles* (member, coordinator, technology steward, session host, sponsors, etc.).



5. Reference Projects:

WIRA CoP: Weleda (2008)

WICO COP: Weleda (2010)

Community of Research (CoRe): FFHS (2005-2008)

MEDI COP: Concept (2012)

COP eCollaboration SIG (2015)